



OSWIECIM CAMP OF DEATH

UNDERGROUND
POLAND SPEAKS

*To be published soon by
Polish Labor Group:*

POLAND'S UNKNOWN SOLDIERS

The Underground Struggle of Polish Labor,
1939-1943

An illustrated and brief story of four and a half years of the constant struggle and unending suffering of the heroic Polish Underground Labor Movement in its valiant resistance to the Nazi invaders of Poland.

Based on eye witness reports, actual Underground statements, and information taken from newspapers and magazines published by the Polish Underground.

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OSWIECIM — CAMP OF DEATH

(Underground Report)

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FOREWORD

For more than four years, Poles—men, women, and children, old and young, of all classes and professions—have been abused and tortured with the utmost wantonness and brutality by the German invaders of Poland. Whoever, today or in the future, speaks of the travail of humanity during these grief-stricken and tragedy-marred war years, must certainly pay humble and profound tribute to the people of Poland who have suffered at the hands of the Gestapo, of despoilers of their culture and traditions, of economic bandits, and in the bestiality of prisons and concentration camps.

"The Camp of Death" is the moving and almost incredible story of Oswiecim concentration camp. The account was written under the tension of the vibrant poignancy that is an inseparable part of the miseries Poland has endured. It was written by a Polish Underground Labor "historian," experienced in the underground struggle, who drew his material from actual contact with persons who underwent, and saw others suffer, the things that he describes. As the writer says, "The Camp of Death" was to be a compilation of the viciousness of Nazism as seen at Oswiecim, so that all who read might understand and make a just evaluation of that which Poland faces, of the problem of ridding all Europe of a scourge that gives rise to such things as Oswiecim.

While some who read this account may spend hours of unrest and anguish when they think of it, this story, nonetheless, deserves reading, for it tells, only too well, that which might have overrun Europe, and eventually the world, had it been allowed to fester and spread without opposition.

In another sense, "The Camp of Death" is a memorial cut out of the heart of living Poland. No one, of whatever race, creed, or class, of whatever shade of political and social orientation, can fail to see that the people of Poland have paid dearly for the

shortsightedness, selfishness, and lack of realism of the world. There are others, not Poles—too many others—who have shared a fate similar to that met at Oswiecim. This story is also a memorial to them.

It should be the determination of everyone who reads this pamphlet to prevent, as much as in him lies, future history from repeating these last suffering years. As "For Your Freedom and Ours" is a watchword of Polish democratic faith, so those who have died at Oswiecim, who have died in defiance of Nazism, have died also "For Your Freedom and Ours."

FLORENCE J. HARRIMAN
Chairman, American Free World Ass'n.
Former U. S. Minister to Norway.

Friendly relations prevail among the various national groups in the camp. The Poles and the left wing Austrians and Czechoslovakians are on the best terms with each other . . . On the whole, the prisoners of various nationalities are getting along well in the camp . . .

We must realize that the world is concerned about Oswiecim not because it has served as a prison for so many, nor because thousands of people have already been murdered there, and no one knows how many more may expect a similar fate. Primarily, the world is concerned with Oswiecim because of the moral problems it poses, because, as the tragic symbol of Nazi domination over Europe and Nazi inhumanity, it presents in a nucleus the problems faced by the community of oppressed European nations.

From *Wolnosc* (Freedom), the oldest Polish underground Labor paper, August 1943.

OBÓZ ŚMIERCI

Ale Ty, Boże! który z wysokości
 Strzalas Two rzucasz na kraj obrońców
 Błagamy Ciebie przez te parujące kości
 Zapal przynajmniej na śmierć naszą — szkodę!
 Niechaj dzień wyjdzie z naszej niebios bramy! —
 Niechaj nas porzuci świat — gdy konamy!

Wydawnictwo



1942 Krak

Reproduction of cover page of "Oswiecim, Camp of Death,"
 published underground in Poland

THE CAMP OF DEATH

(translated from Polish Underground Labor publication)

But Thou, oh Lord! who from on high
 Sendest Thine arrows against the homeland's defenders
 We beseech Thee, for the sake of this handful of bones!
 Make the sun shine at least on our death!
 Let the day come forth from the highest part of Heaven!
 Let the world see us—when we are dying!

—Juliusz Slowacki¹

OSWIECIM concentration camp, Auschwitz in German, has
 for two years symbolized the sinister reality of Polish life under
 German occupation. The shadow of Oswiecim falls over the
 whole of Poland, for the most remote corners of the country
 have yielded their sons and daughters to its torture chambers.

According to verified information up to July 1942, 125,000
 persons passed through the camp, while, during all of the camp's
 existence, barely 7,000 persons have been released. This figure
 includes twelve persons who escaped or who were transferred to
 other camps. At that time 24,000 men and women remained
 alive. Consequently, 94,000 people have perished in Oswiecim.

In addition to Oswiecim, there are a series of other camps,
 organized somewhat later: Tremblinka, Belzec, and others in the
 past year in almost every administrative district. Life in any of
 these camps is an inferno equal to that of Oswiecim. However,
 in Oswiecim, the methods of cruelty have been lowered to their
 vilest depth, and applied in every form.

For a long time, complete secrecy shrouded the sufferings in
 the camp. He who fell into its net kept its dreadful secrets with
 him until his death. At first, a few letters from a prisoner would
 come, short and strange because they were in German, according
 to regulations, and censored by the Germans. The official words,

¹ One of the greatest of Polish poets, lived from 1809-1849.

Ich bin gesund (*I am well*), had no meaning. Later, more ominous signs would come: clothes that were of no more use to their recent owner; an official notification of the time of death; the query as to whether the family wished to obtain the ashes of the deceased. Frequently, only a few days would lapse between the receiving of the *Ich bin gesund* written by the prisoner's own hand and the arrival of his death notice. Often, many months' silence would fill the gap between the false hope of the letters written by a loved one's hand, and the dreadful reality of the ashes sent in a tiny box.

Peculiar death notices like the following began to appear in the hated *Nowy Kurier Warszawski*²: "The Requiem Mass for the soul of the deceased will be celebrated tomorrow. The notification of the funeral will take place after the arrival of the dear ashes."

Sometimes there would be a whole column of such notices, by means of which information was given about the end of someone's tortures in Oswiecim. But even these became too distinct a betrayal of the Oswiecim secret. A German prohibition banned such notices and the word "ashes" ceased to appear in the obituaries, which then gave only the time of death, strangely remote when compared with the date of the paper. It was only from such an innocent and tardy notice that one could decipher where the deceased had ended his days.

Though the Germans wished to hide their crimes completely, news began to leak out of Oswiecim. At first there were only rumors, then more factual news, until the full secret of the camp was revealed.

Several underground publications have appeared containing fragments of the Oswiecim tragedy. To these, the following material collected by us can be added. Our public still does not realize what Oswiecim is. We here, and the whole world, must have as complete a picture as possible.

Each detail has been scrupulously checked, coloring and strong expressions have been eliminated to let the facts speak for them-

² Polish language daily, published by the German authorities of occupation.

selves. Thus, one can see only the stark, dreadful truth of Oswiecim's life, the truth about its sadism and torture, the system of premeditated cruelty that crushes human bodies and souls.

The most terrible element to be found in these pages is perhaps the fact that the camp system, in many cases, destroyed every social tie in a victim and reduced his spiritual life to a fear-driven desire to prolong existence, be it only for a day or for an hour. These pages can easily be the most dreadful indictment of the system that created Oswiecim. The truth is horrible, and any doubt as to whether it should have been told was overcome by the knowledge that we are fighting for the very existence of our nation and must have a full knowledge of what the enemy is like, his nature as fully expressed by Oswiecim.

MANHUNTS

AT the end of one of Warsaw's streets, two heavy trucks stopped and cast strange shadows across the silent houses. Cars that stop in Warsaw always provoke fear because it usually means that either the Gestapo or the military police is at work. This time there was an apparent mistake. Something had gone wrong with one of the motors. A nondescript civilian climbed out to look at the motor, while his companion in the second truck alighted to help.

Suddenly the two drivers stopped fumbling with the motor, with which nothing was wrong, and the trucks swung swiftly across the road, blocking the intersection. The gap between the trucks was filled by uniformed, armed Germans who had been hidden in the interiors, and who watched the milling crowd, mad with fear, like hunters stalking game. People fleeing in the opposite direction were cut off by another "human" dam built in the same way and found themselves in one of the snares set that day on the thoroughfares of Warsaw, the smaller streets, along the broad avenues and in narrow alleys in Wola, Mokotow, Zoliborz . . . in all the outskirts and in the very heart of the city.

The street cars, doubly filled because they had seemed to provide security, were stopped and surrounded — smaller nets set within the gigantic one. Grayish-green hunters went through the cage-like, red street cars, dragging out men and pushing them against the walls of neighboring buildings until, in a moment, hundreds of frightened passersby, understanding nothing, were herded together. No one knew the purpose of that day's hunt on the streets of Warsaw: whether the Germans were after Polish muscles or needed a gift from the occupied country for the farms and factories of the homeland; or whether the elaborate traps were only to ensnare and weaken the still-living Polish national strength.

In the eyes of the trapped men there was anxiety, for they had been cut off suddenly from their daily occupation, torn from their homes. But there was still some hope because of the chance that they might only have been taken to do temporary work in suburban barracks, or on fortifications, and that, in a few hours or days, they would be permitted to return home. A hope and a determination to regain their freedom flared in their hearts, the possibility of escape beckoned to them.

* * * *

Those who were caught in this first group on an August morning in 1940 did not then know that they were destined to be victims of Oswiecim; that they were to increase the still insufficient numbers of the camp's "colonists," that they would return from it *en masse*, though not all on the same day, as an official parcel containing a handful of ashes. In the meantime, the Germans loaded their immense human catch of thousands on trucks and drove them toward Praga.³ The rattling of the loaded cars was accompanied by the painful, and at the same time revengeful, sighs of those who had escaped the traps. As they watched with frightened eyes the dispatch of the victims, they saw tiny bits of paper falling to the road from the trucks, thrown out furtively by the prisoners, after scribbling hastily, "I was caught on the street," and the direction where the note should be delivered. As the papers fluttered to the ground, people collected and delivered them to their destination, to the families or friends of the men who were to disappear.

In the large factory building on Skaryszewska street, where the prisoners were first taken, some hoped to find freedom. An officer on duty explained nothing. He merely took the documents of the passersby, who had been seized like criminals. To some the

³ Suburb of Poland's capital, part of Greater Warsaw, situated on the Eastern bank of the Vistula River.

officer said, "Set free." To others, "Remain." In a few minutes some had regained their freedom, as in the case of a street car operator, a gas worker, or an hospital employee.

Whether a man was held seemed to be decided by his age, whether he was young or mature; vigorous in appearance; and, finally, by the whim of the hunter.

The day of the manhunt had been bright and warm. Therefore, no one had bundled himself in warm clothing, or had an overcoat, to say nothing of providing himself with food and a large quantity of money—just to go out to get a package of cigarettes, or to telephone from a nearby store, or to get medicine from the drug store, or even to go to his office for a few hours.

As evening brought its usual coolness, the lightly-clad prisoners became chilly, for many were even without socks—a wartime fashion. Most had no coats. The examination of the men's documents lasted until the following day, while all night sleepy men tossed about on the factory floor. With the second day came thirst that clouded the mind, an impatient hunger in bodies already undernourished by ersatz food.

The final selection of the pre-determined number of victims took place in a prewar riding academy on Lazienkowska street, while the men shuffled back and forth through the manure that covered the flooring. Finally, after more hours without sleep, water, or food, the prisoners were loaded again into trucks, driven to the railroad station, and jammed into cattle cars that were immediately sealed.

* * * *

Poles gave the name "cops and robbers" to this unparalleled kidnapping of innocent men—unparalleled even to the Germans—from street cars, trains, cafes, and homes. But Polish obdurate endurance was reflected in the lightness of the name, a poking of fun at the enemy in the uneven struggle.

The next month, when the capital had recovered a little from the first manhunt, a second one took place on a larger scale. It became known as the "September" hunt, and victims were taken in the suburbs of Zoliborz, Kolonia Lubeckiego, and Wola. As the first time, people were surrounded by machine guns and a mob of armed beaters. People were dragged from their homes or their places of work. The roundup extended to the Lublin, Radom, and Kielce districts, and continued to spread, until it embraced the entire country, now drained of its strength, to mark new calendar pages with fresh, ghastly dates.

SIGNS OF LIFE

ON the outskirts of greater Warsaw, where the railway tracks branch farther apart, a small hammer lies near the rails, its broken handle bound with string.

An old worker returning from the night shift, taking a short cut across the tracks because he is tired, ignores the hammer because its handle is broken. But a slip of colored paper, tied to the end of the string, catches his attention, and he stoops and picks up the broken hammer. The roll of colored paper becomes a real five-zlotys note, and, unrolling it, he finds he has found thirty zlotys. Outside of being worn, the old man realizes that they are not counterfeit.

It seems like a strange joke. As he twists the hammer handle in his hands, he sees that it has been split deliberately. Unwinding the twine, he pulls the handle from the head, and the shaft falls in two, revealing a hollowed-out groove out of which roll tiny folds of paper. The old man opens one of them and reads:

"We implore the finder to deliver the attached notes at once to the addresses given. We were caught yesterday on the streets of Warsaw, and are being transported to some unknown place. Thirty zlotys are enclosed for expenses. Please hurry. We dropped the hammer out of a hole we made in the car."

The old worker is no longer in a hurry to get home. He squats beside the roadbed and quickly arranges the messages. One is for Praga, another for Powisle, then the Mokotow neighborhood, next Zoliborz, and so on.⁴ One would think the old man was experienced in his job. Finished, he turns toward the city, boards a street car, and starts on his task. He finds his way to many homes—some are spacious apartments, others are attics, basements—but all are filled with the same anxiety. Although he

⁴ Suburbs of Warsaw.

is received as a messenger of life, there is always the fear that he brings news of impending death, particularly if the victim is headed toward Oswiecim.

As he continues his work, the old man grows tired, and other people offer to deliver the remaining messages for him. But he refuses. It is his job. He was chosen for it.

Along Aleja Szucha, in front of Gestapo headquarters,⁵ there is a milling crowd, and some of the people there are those who received notes from the old worker. Others have been without any word. But while all seek information, the Gestapo has the same answer with variations: "Come back in a week. Come back in a month." As days pass, the Oswiecim mail gives more information, via a letter from *Schutzhaefling*,⁶ from number so and so.

⁵ A new building where the Polish Ministry of Education had its offices before the war.

⁶ prisoner.

ON THE WAY

A carpenter, seized with his fellow victims, had fashioned the container that carried the messages found by the old man. He had been seized while walking along a street in Powisle, with his tool kit. The *komm, komm* of a German soldier and the blow of a rifle butt had urged him into a truck jammed to capacity. While he stood in the factory building in Skaryszewska,⁷ and in the riding academy, he had kept his tool box with him, and it was still with him as he was jostled, in the midst of more than 100 others, while the freight car trundled toward Oswiecim.

Some had succeeded in dropping notes from the trucks into which they were first herded, though none knew whether they would be delivered. But the tiny ventilator in the roof of the freight car was too small for a note to be pushed through it.

Some thought of the carpenter and his tools, and a hole was drilled in the side of the freight car. Then the hammer was split to hold the messages, tied, and dropped outside. After the hammer was gone, the old tedium of the journey resumed. The slow movement of the train showed that there were many other freight cars, perhaps fifty. Though it was night, no one was cold, for the closeness of the car, and the number of prisoners, pressed sweating bodies close to one another. No one stood or sat, but only leaned against a fellow victim. Without light, sufficient air, rest, food, or water, the torment was unbearable, except for the mystery of where they were being taken. Now and then one could guess that they were passing through a station, and knowledge brought memories of other days, when one could get off the train and buy lemonade and refreshments at the stations.

After forty-eight hours of this, bodies were completely worn out, men's insides were tied in knots with hunger. Others were

⁷ One of the main streets of Powisle—part of Warsaw on the Vistula River.

in agony for different reasons; for lack of relief, and there was no sanitation. Therefore . . . After so many hours of this, the hundred-odd men stood in a veritable stable, while the hot, stuffy, stinking air was unbearable.

Before the human load had reached its destination, several persons in every car had lost consciousness, and it was impossible to revive them for there was no air. The doors were bolted on the outside and the ventilators were too small.

The hours or days of the journey—it was difficult for the prisoners to gauge the time—passed in torment and dragged on like an inescapable, bad dream. All were mesmerized by the constant *clickety-clack* of the wheels, and the effort to avoid thought, feeling, memories, and the future. In the torpor of the ghastly overcrowded cars, men only endured.

Suddenly the train stopped in a deserted empty field, bordered by a thin row of bushes. At the tail end of the train, three men had succeeded in breaking open the heavy doors while the train was in motion, in order to get fresh air. Dazed by it, almost intoxicated, they tried to escape. The silence of the countryside was broken by rifle shots. The three prisoners ended their escape in a clump of bushes, their bodies nailed to the ground by bullets. The train waited for more than an hour while the Germans rushed to a nearby village, took three peasants from their chores, drove them to the train and forced them into the same car from which the three prisoners had attempted their escape to freedom.

The boys caught in the village had refilled the quota of victims destined for Oswiecim. The locomotive resumed its panting.

GYMNASTICS

THE new group of men brought to the camp shiver from the cold. The last day of August is strangely rainy and gloomy in the highland country of Poland. The desire for sleep, or at least to stretch out, competes with hunger. After a two-days' journey in the unbelievably overcrowded cattle car, one's body demands, at the least, a bundle of straw and a piece of bread. But the regulations order several hours of gymnastics for the new arrivals. The guards shout "run, run."

The men go in one direction, quickly, round and round a gravel yard. The first lap warms their bare feet, but on the second they begin to burn; the third produces the illusion of soft, green grass. The burning becomes a sharp pain, for gravel scorches like the cover of an immense, red hot stove.

"Run, run." At first the guards' fists force the men to successive laps. The blows from clubs force them farther. Each contact (there are 150 per minute) of the bare feet with the sharp gravel blisters, pricks, and bites. The men look for smoother islands on the stony sea of the yard. But no one may get out of line. One of the running prisoners who steps out of the circle is tripped by a guard. He lies there for a second until the persecutors force him to his feet, though he is bent with pain.

A prisoner, who is probably the oldest in the group that has just arrived, lags. He would like to stop for a moment to rest his bare feet from the increasingly terrible bruising of the sharp rocks. A brutal blow of the club on his shoulders forces him to run ahead. His heart pounds, little hammers thump in his temples, eyes, and neck. Slowly his feet seem to become covered with hard pads that increase, with each contact with the gravel, the thousand-fold pricks of hot needles that are the stones.

The color of the stones changes slowly to a pale pink. The brown of the camp yard, rutted by the running, is dyed by drops

of blood that squeeze out of naked feet that pound on ceaselessly

The gravel and the feet take on the same coloring as the brown of the stone is lightened by the red and purple of human blood, and the pale rosiness of the skin turns slowly to red. Still the running in one direction continues. Every prisoner's body is a bundle of throbbing nerves; to breathe is like plunging a long blade into one's breast. To end it one must cease moving his legs. But there is no end. Sometimes, the pointed stones disappear, the reverberating bell of one's heart becomes silent, and the hammers in one's head grow quiet. But, that is after a man loses consciousness. A husky guard approaches the prisoner slumped on the ground and stamps his heavy boot on the prisoner's chest. When this yields no result, the guard drags the unconscious man to the pump and pours a stream of cold water on his head. Or, as a savage method devised in the German school of sadism, the unconscious man is brought to his senses by jamming a stick into his mouth, and twisting it. To faint several times does not save a victim from torture. He has to continue running with bleeding feet on gravel that has become purple.

Finally, a new exercise is ordered: turning about as fast as possible. One sees the faces of his fellow inmates whirling about and the red blocks of the barracks doing a dance. The dizziness soon produces nausea and unconsciousness. It is restored by the boots of the Nazi guards or by the stick. The "gymnastics" are concluded by making the prisoners squat and remain motionless. Legs that are tired to the limits of endurance by running now begin to tremble; the torn skin of bruised feet cannot stand the weight of the body; knees wobble. The guards roar with laughter. It is a diabolically grotesque sight, these shaking legs, and faces pale with pain and anger. A blow on the weakened knees brings the victims to order. "Silence! Remain in the squatted position." There is more of this, and more men faint, until the prisoners go to dinner, leaving blood-stained marks on the barrack floors and stairs.

There is nothing with which the prisoners can treat their feet because the denim suits cannot be torn into strips. Some find a

piece of paper and use it for a bandage. But the blood soaks quickly through the paper.

At the next day's "gymnastics," the wounds in the feet deepen. The next day they begin to fester. The more ingenious and fortunate prisoners make a kind of sandal from bits of boards, scraps, cardboard, and little pieces of string. But the wounds never heal. They will slowly become fetid. Unclean traces will mark the prisoner's steps until the end of his Oswiecim days. They will become less visible because the pus has a grayish brown color.

WOUNDS NEVER HEAL

GERMANS like to parade their sentiment for animals, particularly dogs. During requisitions in villages, they almost never fail to stroke a strange, shaggy dog, or to give it lard taken from a farmer. The same hands that, a moment ago, bayoneted an unhappy peddler who was carrying a little sack of rye or potatoes, stroke the dog that does patrol work. There are several such pets in Oswiecim. One beautiful, big, wolf dog walks every day with his Nazi master in the area between the barbed wire fence of the main camp and the service buildings. The owner is young, with a close-fitting, well-pressed, SS⁸ uniform. His rosy complexioned face is usually smiling. The animal is well-trained, obedient to every command. It walks at its master's heels, jumps high when its master gives the proper sign with his hand, retrieves.

From inside the barbed wire fence detachments of prisoners march to work far beyond the camp, while others work in the service buildings, stables, cow sheds, rabbit cages, stock houses. Every day, at a certain hour, a wagon of caskets is pushed by prisoners from the main gate. The newly dead are being taken to the crematorium. Later, the wagon returns with its caskets ready for future use.

The dog and the master follow the daily camp sights attentively. But, while the former seems to be satisfied, the man is obviously bored by the monotony. Suddenly he sees an older prisoner carrying a pail of water that weighs twenty-two pounds, the man being barely a hundred pounds. He walks slowly without trying to make the feverish effort demanded of him. Two months ago, before his arrival at the camp, he weighed a hundred and fifty. In a soft, commanding voice, the SS man gives the

⁸ Schutzstaffeln, in black uniform, Hitler's favorite Elite Guard.

animal an order, and the dog hurls himself at the prisoner and sinks his teeth into the man's thigh. The prisoner drops the pail and raises his hands instinctively to his face, screaming with terror. Then the SS man calls the dog and, when he returns, caresses his head.

Several times during the day this, and similar, performances are re-enacted. The painful wounds caused by the dog's white, gleaming teeth never have a chance to heal, and they fester for months; as does the smallest scratch.

In Oswiecim, wounds never heal.

* * * *

A sudden, heavy shower clogs the camp sewer system, which overflows into the camp yard. The water must then be drained from the sewer by pail and the water dumped into another ditch. About twenty prisoners jump into the water to do the work, but their haste is not because the water is cold. Standing over them are several SS men, and two other dogs. The prisoners, standing in water up to their knees, are covered with the sweat of fear that, when the SS men become bored with watching the terror develop in their victims' faces, they will urge the dogs on them. The dogs are well aware of the "game." At a sign, they pounce on the backs of the prisoners and grab at their throats. A split second before the dogs sink their fangs into the flesh, the human beasts, temporarily satisfied, call the dogs back, and pat them in appreciation. The excited dogs, barking loudly, wait impatiently for a renewal of the game. No one of the prisoners knows whether a "mistake" will occur and one of the dogs will drive his teeth into a scrawny neck.

It takes "skill" to maintain this suspense of horror, to give the order to the dogs at the right moment, for the dogs to charge like wolves at their victims, and for the prisoners to literally die from fear. Often, their pale, numbed bodies collapse under the weight of the dogs, and the SS men shout with glee, and then call to the dogs. It goes on endlessly.

"ARBEIT MACHT FREI" (Work Brings Freedom)

THERE is a large sign over the camp entrance with the words *Arbeit Macht Frei*, (*Work Brings Freedom*), while from any spot in the camp one can see the huge chimney of the crematory. It is an ugly, brownish red.

A prisoner's life moves between these two points—the sign and the chimney—from the moment he "loses" his life when he enters the camp until the moment he "regains" it as a bit of ashes coming from the crematory.

Surrounding the camp for an area several miles in width are cultivated fields from which the previous owners have been evicted. Many farm buildings and workshops adjoin the camp and its barracks. Scores of miles beyond the actual camp boundaries are the coal mines. All work, above ground or underground, is done by prisoners. They till fields, build houses, mine coal, load and unload trains. They produce goods of which only a part is for the camp; the major share goes to the German Army.

Oswiecim's work is organized under a plan of its own. Everything is at top speed, and the objective is as frequent a turnover of labor as possible. The most important product of the camp is the smoke from the red chimney because, bluntly, Oswiecim is for the liquidation of lives. Until recently, it produced fifty deaths a day. There have been days when the chimney could not consume its enormous ration, and then bodies have been buried.

* * * *

It is four a.m. Dawn. In a half-hour the gong at the gate will sound reveille. But movement has already started in the barracks. Prisoners have jumped from their pallets ahead of time so as to order their mattresses, blankets, pull on their clothing, rush to the ever-occupied latrines, and splash themselves with

a handful of cold water that is used by hundreds in succession. All is done in great haste so as to avoid punishment for being late, in order to have time to lap up a few mouthfuls from the bowls, one to each three prisoners, to drink a portion of "coffee," and to rush into the yard for morning roll call.

Immediately after the roll call, the prisoners run to their proper groups as commands are barked at them. Those assigned to work at the sawmill stand near the gong; those to make concrete line-up near the middle barracks. In another spot are those detailed for the mines; and farther away are those to work in the fields. Every one moves as if he was going to a fire. In the early days, when the camp was being organized, one group would be detailed to cart sand from one place to another, and a second group to cart it back to where it was dug. Then, as now, the point was to keep the chimney smoking. Once accounted for, the prisoners leave the camp to the strains of martial music. The rising sun watches over thousands of prisoners marching to inevitable doom. The setting sun will cast its rays over diminished ranks.

In the square of the camp is an unleveled rising, up which toil men shoving wheelbarrows loaded with earth, one after the other, like ants. There is a strangeness about the picture, for it is as if the wheelbarrows had the life, as if the dirt was moving itself. The real living are nothing but automatons, moving with stiff, laborious efficiency. The arms that grasp the handles of the barrows are like sagging wires. Swollen veins show on scraggly arms. The stooped bodies seek relief from exhaustion. Half-covered eyes can see only a short distance ahead through their fatigue. Striding beside the endless line is an overseer who never spares the use of the whip he carries constantly. "Do not lag! Quicker!" is his cry.

It is a ghastly parade, each prisoner praying for strength to reach the top of the slope, when the downward pitch will ease his burden. If only he can take one, two, three, four . . . steps. The wheelbarrow sways from side to side; numbed and stiffened hands clutch at the shafts. Suddenly, one barrow tips over and its "driver" collapses. Then another follows the first, but the

overseer is only interested in driving on the remainder. The "guilty" prisoners are beaten on the head and then the overseer rushes on to keep his herd in motion.

One hour, two hours, eight hours and no let-up on the square, which is slowly being leveled, and on which a synthetic rubber plant will be built. The only discernible change is in the prisoners, for their fatigue becomes a vibrant pulsation that seems to isolate itself in each part of their bodies.

During the day, the procession stops several times as a barrow turns over, and a prisoner collapses, while clods of earth tumble around a body that is no more alive, less alive, in fact, than the earth. But—*Arbeit Macht Frei*—Work Brings Freedom.

* * * *

An overseer reports 150 men leaving to dig potatoes. The SS man checking the count sneers. It is a strange detachment. Its marching is unaffected by the camp band as it moves out into the field. Heads loll, eyes are almost blind, bodies sway. They are like shadows, pitching one way and then another.

The group has been assigned to "light" work and, as light work calls for less food, "light" rations are issued to them. The camp torture and their work has helped to make them semblances of humanity. These men have lost from 4-5 pounds every few days.

Under normal circumstances, they would have been put in beds long ago, but now they go to dig potatoes. Thus Oswiecim elicits the last bit of strength from its victims. Clubs swing through the air to improve the marching of the men. Many of the prisoners must crawl on the ground out of weakness. Bony hands are the sole motive power for many whose legs are without strength, as they move from one hill to another. When two fall over, the overseer leaps at them and shouts, "Do not sleep." But he does it without meaning, for he knows that the entire con-

tingent will change soon, for it is the group in the process of being "finished off" on its way to the chimney.

* * * *

The number of prisoners who arrived recently at Oswiecim is over 30,000. The average camp population is 10,000. Perhaps 2,000 have returned to the world, leaving about 18,000 human beings whose epitaph is the three words inscribed over the gate, written daily in the smoke from the crematory.

NIGHTS GRANT NO RELIEF

THE straw that has been threshed a hundred of times by twisting prisoners is now only chaff. One mattress "supports" at least two prisoners. Frequently, there is a third. One paper-thin blanket covers each two bodies, gripped with cold and trembling with fatigue. Over everyone is a blanket of darkness in which pain, anxiety, nostalgia, and fear lose their identity. Sleep would help if it could come, but only whispers provide a break in the constant torture of work and punishment, and the whispers are devoid of human relationship. They provide only a nightmarish liaison between still-living bodies. One whisperer is a former exile to Siberia under the Czarist regime. He speaks of a prisoners' revolt, when a fellow inmate was beaten by a guard; about the ensuing trial; the legal defense; the verdict; the work on the deportees' own land that they received in Siberia. His tale falls flat. Now and then one of the prisoners laughs or interrupts with a brutal "Shut up." After all, a story of prisoners' conditions under Czarist deportation is not to be compared to Oswiecim. The whisperer's tale is for children.

The *Stubenfuehrer*, or supervisor of his fellow inmates, snarls for silence from his bed on the table. Sometimes he allows the whispering to continue, for even he would like to listen to an interesting tale as a means of hiding the spectre of Oswiecim and to assuage his debased soul, sold for better food and a more comfortable bed. During the day, he tortures the prisoners who are left at his mercy.

More whispering begins and the *Stubenfuehrer* lifts his head and listens so quietly that the whispering becomes more audible. A ship is being sailed on an immense ocean to an unknown land. Widespread treetops with strange foliage rustle high over the heads of the prisoners. The stars of a foreign sky look down on

them in unknown patterns. All the humor and sadness and strangeness of years ago are blended into a prisoner's life. It is the story of an Argentinian argosy, soon to be released—*Arbeit Macht Frei*—from Oswiecim. With a higher fever than usual, he resurrects his past in beautiful prose. The silence is filled with poignant visions of beauty, freedom, and fulfillment, rapturous dreams of distant echoes. Suddenly the silence is broken by the wailing from a mattress nearer the window, where a young boy lies.

Today he had been flogged publicly twenty-five times with a massive rawhide whip. The measured blows had cut his skin many times, torn his muscles, and had driven bits of clothing into the wounds. His back is now a mass of festers. Feverish and restless, he constantly rolls off the mattress, bumping his fellow prisoners, first left, then right.

"Sleep, boy, sleep," someone calls to him. "He had enough sleep during roll call. That was enough for him," a voice answers.

Returning from work, where he had been unloading 165-lb. bags of cement from a freight car, he had looked as though he would die on the spot. Somehow, he dragged himself to the camp and there he had laid down to sleep beside a shed. He will moan until dawn, but he will respond to the morning roll call, and return to the station to unload freight cars. His unspoken wish is that he might die, while sleep is impossible because of the memory and the fear brought by the flogging.

From the mattress near the prisoners' lockers one can hear a constant shuffling sound, made by a man nicknamed the "engineer." He is moving his hands up and down in an attempt to drive the numbness from his dislocated shoulders, the result of being suspended from the "post" the previous day. His punishment was for smoking during work. Sentenced to two hours suspension, the first hour had been expiated the previous Sunday, and, for a week, he had not slept as a result. Now, the second hour had been "fulfilled." But it is not only the numbness and tormenting pain that racks his body. He is choked inwardly with rage at his own impotence, debasement, and, above all, the senselessness of

the condition of himself and those about him. He breathes softly while he continues to move his hands back and forth, up and down, thus driving away what scant sleep there is in this Oswiecim barrack.

"Turn over," calls a prisoner, as he pokes his neighbor in the back, so that he will have room to turn over. The room is so crowded that, when one prisoner moves to relieve the stiffness of lying in one position, almost everyone else has to move.

It is not difficult to identify the sounds in an Oswiecim barrack, from the rhythmic groaning that accompanies the pain of festering wounds, to the constant scratching of itching scabs that goes on under the blankets, to the impatient sighing because of the ever-present fleas and lice despite the systematic "lice hunts" ordered officially by the camp authorities.

There are other sounds: a body creeping across other bodies, the swearing of those who are trampled upon, the patter of feet on the bare wooden floor near the door—a body racked by dysentery, which is endemic in the camp, or one suffering from a kidney trouble and forced to make endless trips to the latrine. The shabby substitute for sleep is a fitful dozing that brings neither forgetfulness nor relaxation.

Even the nights at Oswiecim grant no relief.

BASEMENTS AND LOFTS

IN the corner of the rectangle formed by the barracks is the penal barrack. It is built in the same style as the others, reminiscent of Austrian days, when they housed regiments of the Imperial Royal Artillery, the same style in which new ones have been built by prisoners. There are the same dreary-looking red walls, and plain, box-like shapes. Actually, the penal barrack is a double building, connected by a wall, which is the major deviation from the general architecture of the camp. The second is the row of tiny windows, set just above the foundation, that look out on the world with a gloomy, mysterious appearance. They are the eyes of the underground, dark cells from which one never returns.

On one particular day, there is unusual activity in the penal barrack, for it is moving day. The entire penal group, about 300 men, is being moved upstairs in the neighboring, newly-built block. Serious cases are being taken to the hospital. There are many guesses about what is happening, from the hospital being expanded to the complaint that "it's about time because it is overcrowded." The bustle around the barrack continues into the night, but all one can hear is the crunching of feet on the gravel, and the sounds of steps filtering down and vanishing into the basement: a new detachment of prisoners, 500 Russians. Thus, in addition to its Polish backbone, Oswiecim has appendages—Czechs, Germans, Jews, Serbs, and now Russians.

The question is why these last should be placed with the gravely ill, for they cannot be sick if they came in by their own strength. No prisoner in the other barracks tries to sleep, for all listen to what is happening in the suddenly emptied and as suddenly re-filled penal barrack.

There is a brief pause between the sounds of shuffling feet and the outbreak of inhuman cries that penetrate into the night from

out of the tightly closed windows. There is fear in the cries, but the ears of listening prisoners, well-versed in the art, can distinguish the cries of pain from those of fear, and from those of despairing resignation. The performance is repeated several times and the crescendo of cries rises. Then there is silence, an ominous silence that spreads around the double barrack. In the ensuing daylight, the silent barrack seems like a huge slab over an immense grave.

For three days, nothing breaks the silence of the barrack. The fourth night, the gravel again crunches under the pressure of wheels. Trucks drive up to the barrack to remove the clothing that had recently been on seriously ill Polish prisoners brought to the hospital, and those taken from the Russian prisoners-of-war. The camp suits and the uniforms are sent to the camp warehouses. Soon, the load changes to naked bodies piled high between the sides of the carts that, beyond the gate, move toward the crematorium.

It is a five-minute walk from the camp yard to the crematorium, but the prisoners pushing the cars are in even a greater hurry to discharge their burdens. But the work goes on for a long time in the task of shifting the "loads" from the penal barrack to the red chimney.

The feeble moonlight is a ghastly spotlight for the piles of stiffened features and livid flesh. One cart, unevenly loaded, overturns, and, for a minute, the corpses seem to regain life as they leap over one another and roll down the embankment, waving their stiffened arms, coming to rest in a scattered mass. The "prisoner ghouls" work feverishly to reload the cart in the fast waning darkness of the night. Before they finish, sudden dawn brings out the strange, greenish pallor of the dead. One prisoner, who has grabbed a corpse by the arm, stops suddenly and stares for a long time into its face. Years ago he had seen another like it, in an abandoned trench, with the same spectral appearance.

It is the mark of poison gas.

No one emerges alive from the darkness of the underground cells to tell a word, and yet, in the first bit of dawn, the secret

of 800 dead men filters through. A trip to Oswiecim, a flight of steps into the "underground," and death by gas.

* * * *

The detachment of prisoners detailed to weed beets spreads over the field, their fingers moving among the young plants. The monotony of their work is broken occasionally by a train passing in the distance, moving from one horizon into another. For a moment, as the prisoners watch the disappearing train, they pull beets and weeds, but the threat of punishment from the overseer soon drags them back to attention to their labors, back from a vision of freedom to the earth.

On one day, a train appeared bearing wounded soldiers. The sight of the bandaged heads, arms, and legs of German soldiers caused a sudden fever to course through the men. They leaped up, clenched their fists, and shouted at the top of their lungs with a hope that burst their hearts.

The enraged and frightened overseer, unable to understand what motivated the prisoners, leaped at them, yelling for his assistant. Between the two of them, they quelled the riot, and, in the process, beat five men to death. The remainder were ordered back to the camp, sixty half-conscious prisoners, who were sent to the penal building, where their last, strange joy had its ending.

* * * *

Over the penal barrack is a loft in which are tiny windows. The semi-darkness barely reveals the outlines of posts that support the roof, from each of which a man is suspended. It is the "post." The victims jerk violently as they seek relief from being chained by the wrists to hooks driven into the posts. Their feet just miss the floor. Their arms, bent backwards, at the small of the back, sag under the body's weight and slowly dislocate at the shoulder joints. There is not a vacant post in the loft.

Each motion to relieve the pressure on the wrists, or in the shoulders, tends to increase the pain throughout the body. Each effort to rest one's feet on the floor multiplies the agony.

This is Oswiecim's "Golgotha," which takes place on Sundays.

As in the case of the "engineer," the weekly installments of this form of torture is based on the same principle that makes Oswiecim torture a prisoner, sentenced to death, for a year after sentence has been passed.

The worst of it is that, after the "post" is over, there is no place for the prisoner to rest, for regulations forbid sleeping in the daytime. Therefore, a victim must drag his torn, pain-wracked body about the camp yard, lean against a barrack wall, or stretch out on the sharp gravel. At night, the thin mattresses are no relief from the hardness of the floor. The next morning he will return to work.

"Crimes" that lead to the post are anything from smoking during work, to hiding from work during a rain storm, to stealing bread, to speaking out of turn at roll call.

ESCAPE

THE ominous wailing of the siren can be heard for miles around the camp as a warning that a prisoner has escaped. It is also a knell of death for the remaining prisoners, for the camp rule is that ten prisoners are put to death for every escaped prisoner.

When the siren calls, all must report to the courtyard for roll call. There the men stand, paralyzed with fear, eyes searching up and down the rows to find who is missing. It is a weird hope against hope that the escaped prisoner is not from their group. Suddenly, the searching eyes discover a gap in one line. From the others comes an audible sigh of relief. From the line in question, there is new anxiety. However, no one knows whether the little man who once filled the gap has escaped or is dead, and so the fear remains.

The prisoners stand motionless for one, two, three hours. From the west, dark clouds approach with the night. Noon meals, sleep, everything passes by, while the wind tears at the flimsy prisoner suits, made from wood fibre. The round caps on the prisoners' heads are scattered around the yard. Backs ache, legs grow numb, cold and fear do the rest. Suddenly, men begin to wave their arms, move their feet, shake their heads, until a mass convulsion sweeps through the ranks. It stops as soon as it begins, for the overseer has turned back to watch the ranks. Those who were unlucky enough to gain a second's respite will watch more closely for their next chance.

Now and then a body falls to the ground, and one prisoner is no longer concerned with whether he will or will not be one of the ten, although he has become the eleventh—or the first. Since no one may move him, his body grows stiff in the wind, cold, and rain of a twenty-four hour vigil. Other bodies collapse and lose interest in the death watch. Finally, the camp commandant appears, and strides up and down the ranks. He moves silently,

while the eyes of the prisoners watch his coming and going. Each prisoner straightens himself with a tremendous effort, sticks out his chest, and raises his head when the commandant's eyes fall on him.

Komm! falls the verdict. A last effort comes from the victim as his feeble body tries to convince the German of his powers of endurance. *Komm!* It sounds again and the prisoner's body deflates abruptly.

The commandant's eyes and legs move on. Each time he beckons, there is a sigh of relief from the remaining prisoners. "It is not I," the sighs say. One lone cry says "It is I."

The ten are marched to the basement of the penal building. Though the camp law provides for their release if the escaped prisoner is found in three days, the prisoners know it is a useless hope. Even if the prisoner returns, both he and the hostages will die.

Oswiecim knows no resurrection.

* * * *

Near the highway twenty prisoners are wrecking a building. Some of them smash in the front walls with crow bars, others cart away the debris, a few pile the usable lumber. The overseer is visibly satisfied, for the men are new and do not, as yet, know the tricks of faking work. Only one behaves "normally." He always appears at a different hole in the wreckage carrying the same piece of lumber. The overseer knows what he is doing and watches carefully so that the prisoner soon becomes completely emboldened. After putting down his load, he disappears, but the overseer watches his scrawny body wriggling itself under a pile of rubbish. There is a moment's wait, and then the German raises his voice in a hoarse shout: "He has escaped. Look for him."

The other prisoners, moved by a mixture of fear and rage that one of them should have "endangered" the lives of the others, dig furiously in their search. The overseer, in the guise of beater, directs the men in one direction and then another, always careful to keep up the suspense, but meanwhile moving the men slowly in the direction of the "escaped" prisoner.

Then a prisoner discovers the half-hidden body and strikes at it with a crow bar. "Do not hit me. You have found me. I won't escape again." But the words are unheeded as one prisoner after another struggles to strike a blow, whether it lands on head, chest, arms, or legs. The overseer is pleased immensely with his game, until he realizes that it will end abruptly. "Stop it!" he calls, but too late. A blow on the prisoner's head ends his struggling, and Oswiecim's "guests" have demonstrated that they do not encourage another to bargain with *their* lives as the price of *his* freedom.

* * * *

One man escaped as far as beyond the "tenth mountain, the tenth river," and was re-captured. He had learned again to breathe easily, to again believe in, and have a desire for, justice, goodness, truth, but they found him in the home of friends after two months had passed.

His return to the camp is a triumphant solemnity. He is dressed in his best Sunday clothes. On his chest is a placard with the inscription: "Hurrah! I'm back with you!"

The whole camp looks on excitedly and the prisoners race around to find vantage points from which to see the "prodigal." There are even shouts of joy because the man's fellow-inmates know that it is not they who will gather the harvest of the two months' "vacation."

The man's face is chalk-white under a ludicrous jockey cap, looking like a clown's mask. Drums beat a welcome tattoo that will soon become a leave-taking. The procession winds through the camp and finally reaches the penal building. Then the crowd of prisoners disperse for the roll call to ascertain that no one else is missing.

The muffled report of a rifle volley breaks the evening silence. The matinee "idol" has made his last exit.

THE IMPATIENT ONES

ONE may suffer from nauseous hunger, flaccid muscles, frozen fingers and toes for many months. Each day one may re-live the beatings he has received and the torture of work. One may even forget what part of his body is still healthy—relatively speaking—and also forget the dirty wounds. Life can become so unimportant that a man may steal a piece of bread from a dying man without the slightest twinge of conscience, or whine fruitlessly, after leaving the hospital, for a larger share of a mattress. Finally, one may be constantly suffocated with fear, debasement, and helplessness—all this—and still want to live.

And then a letter may arrive from home containing a misunderstood word, misunderstood by the camp authorities, and it will be the cause of the final, bitter drop in the cup of a tortured soul, and will poison the faint will to exist in a man's breast. It will be the last straw, and what was a mere trifle will be the beginning of a desire for the end . . . just as a tree may stand against the worst hurricanes and the most vicious weather, and finally topple under the pressure of a gentle breeze.

But, of course, in Oswiecim, it is difficult to keep one's balance.

The worst thing there is not the unending struggle against death. Nor is death the greatest fear. Many do not try to defend themselves against it, though, for some, death may escape being caught, even though it is pursued.

The camp is surrounded by strands of barbed wire. Several yards in front of this wire is a single strand, on which there is a sign marked "Halt!" This is a warning to those who would cross their Rubicon. At night, a high, wired fence is electrified, while, day and night, the camp is guarded by men in towers set at intervals around and outside the single strand of wire.

Sometimes, usually at the meeting of night and day, a prisoner will steal down a barrack stairs and run toward the fence,

ignoring the "halt" warning. Fixing his eyes on the silhouette of the guard, he will walk toward the barbed wire. In the prisoner's face is a determination to let the guard know what he is doing, that he is trying to escape. But it has another expression—a despairing plea for death. "Riddle me with bullets. Kill me!" The man runs alongside the barbed wire, for there is no use in touching it as dawn has come and the current is gone. As he approaches the second tower, bullets hit him in the arm. Streaming blood, he runs on, faster, toward the third tower. There the machine gun is more merciful, and he is hit in the chest.

Still, death does not come, until the bullets strike him again, and again, and the "released" prisoner topples against the barbed wire. On his face there is neither plea nor audaciousness.

Nothing but the relief of death.

Note: Excerpts of this pamphlet have been published in *Free World Magazine*, March, 1944 by special permission of *Poland Fights*.

ANNEX:

NETWORK OF SLAVE CAMPS IN POLAND

The existence of over a hundred concentration camps in occupied Poland has been verified by the Polish Underground through special surveys conducted under the very eyes of the Gestapo. Their exact number and location is a secret guarded closely by the occupation authorities. However, the Underground has succeeded in compiling lists of the most important camps in Poland and of camps in the Reich proper where Polish prisoners are kept.

The list is still far from complete. New camps are being established constantly, whose locations the Germans keep secret, especially the youth camps, the so-called "Camps For the Correction of Youth," and the camps for children, the Nazi "Educational Institutions," where Polish children under 12 are brought up as Germans. These children's camps are usually located deep in Germany.

"Camp Districts"

Certain localities in Poland have been selected by the invader as especially suitable for the establishment of concentration camps. In such areas there are often two or three camps, only several miles distant from each other. Some sections, where the number of camps is very great, may be called "camp areas." The former populations of these "areas" have been moved elsewhere.

Each camp, separated from the outer world by barbed wire often charged with high voltage, has its own German commandant and governing staff, German guards, and firing squads. Regulations vary according to the type of camp.

The camps known to the Polish Underground are in these categories:

Temporary Concentration Camps

In these, newly arrested Poles are kept until they are classified and sent to the regular camps for permanent imprisonment. The

time spent in these "transient" camps varies from several days to a few months. The régime is especially bad, the treatment deliberately brutal, aiming to kill the greatest possible number of prisoners. The survivors are sent to other camps. There are nine of these temporary concentration camps known to the Underground:

- Augustow I
- Dzialdowo I
- Inowroclaw
- Konstantynow, near Lodz (special camp for the victims of deportation)
- Lodz I
- Majdanek I (near Lublin)
- Myslowice, in Silesia (which has a very large women's division)
- Sosnowiec I
- Tarnow I

General Concentration Camps

These are for Poles condemned to long terms of imprisonment, which usually mean life, for very few emerge alive. Frequently, release from one camp merely means transfer to another, often from one in Poland to one in Germany. The Polish Underground has found twenty-four such camps. One of the oldest and most notorious is that at Oswiecim, which has recently been greatly expanded by the addition of the entire area of the village of Rajcza. A section of this camp has been converted into the so-called "camp of death."

The following camps have been checked by the Underground:

- Augustow II
- Ciechanow
- Dobrzyn
- Dyle (near Bilgoraj)
- Dzialdowo II
- Dziesiata (near Lublin)
- Grudziadz



Map showing location of major concentration camps in Poland

Jaslo
 Koldyczewo (near Baranowicze)
 Lodz
 Majdanek II
 Nasielsk
 Oswiecim
 Pelkinia
 Plonsk
 Potulice I (near Naklo)
 Pomiechówek I
 Rajsko (near Oswiecim)
 Sierpc
 Sosnowiec II
 Tarnow II
 Tremblinka I
 Trawniki (near Lublin)
 Camp near Wloclawek
 Camp near Chelm

The Underground investigators have thus far verified the presence of Poles in thirteen camps in the Reich:

Buchenwald
 Dachau
 Flossenbürg
 Gross-Rosen (near Breslau)
 Gusen
 Hamburg
 Hohenbüsch
 Labiawa (in Eastern Prussia)
 Mathausen
 Oranienburg
 Ravensbüsch
 Stutthof (near Danzig)
 Sachsenhausen (near Berlin)

Forced Labor Camps

At the height of the mass deportations of the Polish agricultural population, the Germans organized a new kind of camp, to which the dispossessed peasants were sent. The larger camps of this type are:

Potulice II
 Starogard I
 Tremblinka II

The Nazis have also set up a network of "small" camps for forced labor, one or two in nearly every district. These camps number more than sixty.

The district camps are supervised by the Gestapo and are subject to the Nazi district leader, the *Kreishauptman*. The slightest misdemeanor on the part of a Pole is punishable by confinement in one of these camps, which are ruled even more arbitrarily than the larger general camps.

Concentration Camps for Clergy

Great numbers of the clergy are sent to the general camps, but there are also special camps for them:

Bojanowo
 Konstanz II (near Lodz)
 Camp near Danzig (the name could not be ascertained)
 There are several other camps for the clergy in the Reich.

Concentration Camps for Women

Nearly every concentration camp has a women's division. One of the largest is at Oswiecim. Polish women are also sent in great numbers to the large German camp for women in Ravensbüsch, in Mecklenburg. The Bojanow and Konstanz camps have special divisions for nuns.

Concentration Camps for Jews

These camps have been established in conjunction with the Nazi campaign to liquidate the European Jews. Some of them are simply places of execution where Jews from Poland and the

rest of Europe are asphyxiated, electrocuted, and machine-gunned. The most notorious of these are:

Belzec

Sobibor, near Wlodawa

Tremblinka III

Six other camps for Jews are located in:

Starogard II

Potulice III

Kosow Podlaski

Trawniki

Pomieczowek II

Between Chelm and Wlodawa (the name could not be ascertained)

In these camps, too, the Jews are murdered, but mostly by starvation, disease, torture, and forced labor.

Camps for "Improvement of the Race"

There are several of this type, mostly in the Reich proper. Their names and locations are kept in strict secrecy. Thus far, only one such camp has been located in Poland by the Underground, the camp in Helenow, near Lodz. Upon the proposal of the "scientists' group" of the Nazi Party of the Lodz district, an experimental camp for the "improvement of the Nordic race" was established there in the summer of 1941.

The Helenow camp sets itself the goal of raising the standards of the Nordic racial type to the ideal conceived by the Nazi "race scientists." When the camp was first opened, several score of young German boys and as many German girls between the ages of 15 and 18 were brought there. Preliminary activities were begun; playgrounds, classrooms, a swimming pool, and a hall were built. Many small cabins were erected, each to accommodate two persons. About the same time, many Polish families in the districts of Lodz and Poznan lost their young sons and daughters, all of them of excellent physical constitution, blue eyes, and so-called "Nordic" characteristics.

Boys and girls, captured in the streets or on trains, are taken

to Lodz, where they undergo a thorough medical examination. Those in whom the slightest physical defect is discovered are sent home. The others are given a series of inoculations, after which they are once more examined by doctors. They are then taken to Helenow and separated according to age and sex groups.

Couples have been settled in every cabin in the camp: German boys with Polish girls, and Polish boys with German girls.

The food situation in the camps is excellent, unlike that in the rest of occupied Poland. There is meat every day, milk, fresh fruit, much white bread and vegetables. Despite the long camp curriculum, life there would seem relatively free and pleasant: the Germans and the Poles are given equal treatment. The only duty that is absolutely enforced is the regular performance of sexual intercourse with the partner assigned. The compliance with this duty is under the constant control of the camp physicians, and any failure in this respect is punished severely. There were several attempts at suicide among the Polish girls. There is a constant turnover in the camp. Mothers-to-be are sent to Germany. What the future holds for these girls is clear.

Camps for "Correction of Youth"

There is little information as to the number, location, and conditions in these camps. The only thing known is that there are several of them in Poland and in the Reich. Their inmates are Polish boys and girls.

Concentration Camps for Children So-Called "Educational Institutes"

Polish children under 12 are seized in great numbers and subjected to the Nazi process of Germanization. For this purpose they are deported to special camps, called "Educational Institutes." There are separate camps for children under 6; camps for children between 6 and 9; and, recently, camps for the group between 9 and 12. Prior to deportation, the children are examined carefully by doctors. The weakest children, instead of being returned to their parents, are left in the care of the local communities.

Sometimes they are killed outright. A report smuggled out of the Oswiecim camp in December 1942 states:

"Boys and girls over 12 are included in the groups of regular prisoners. When children under 12 are brought to the camp, they are not admitted, but murdered on the spot."

Healthy and physically well-developed children are sent to concentration camps in the Reich. The number and location of these camps are not known, for the Germans surround them with the greatest secrecy. However, the great numbers of children sent into Germany continually indicate that these "educational establishments" are very numerous.

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For further information about Poland and the Polish Underground, read the following publications:

PROGRAM FOR A PEOPLE'S POLAND
MANIFESTO TO THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD
UNCONQUERED POLAND
POLISH WORKER'S DAY IN OCCUPIED WARSAW
POLISH LABOR FIGHTS ON
POLISH LABOR FACES WORLD PROBLEMS
POLISH LABOR'S UNDERGROUND PRESS
BATTLE OF WARSAW GHETTO
EXTERMINATION BY STARVATION
UNDERGROUND VOICE OF POLISH TEACHERS
TOWARD POLISH-SOVIET UNDERSTANDING
SOCIAL BACKGROUND OF THE PREWAR POLISH
POLITICAL STRUCTURE
WORKMEN'S PROTECTIVE LEGISLATION IN POLAND
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